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SIPDIS

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [TU](#) [FR](#) [EUN](#) [UNSC](#)

SUBJECT: FM DOUSTE-BLAZY'S SPEECH TO FRENCH AMBASSADORS

REF: PARIS 5818

Classified By: Acting POL Bruce Turner for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

[11.](#) (SBU) SUMMARY: FM Douste-Blazy kicked off the August 30 second session of the annual Ambassadors' Conference with a more detailed elaboration or "road map" for President Chirac's foreign policy "grand orientation" of the previous day (reftel). On relations with the U.S., Douste-Blazy said that the U.S. had discovered the limits of unilateralism and was prepared to work together with Europe, and that Europe for its part needed to seize the opportunity to establish a "true partnership" with the U.S. Along with European Affairs Minister-Delegate Catherine Colonna in separate remarks, he outlined next steps for French EU policy following the failed referendum for an EU constitutional treaty. On Turkey, he underscored Chirac's statement that Ankara would need to 'clarify' its declaration on non-recognition of Cyprus. In contrast to Chirac, Douste-Blazy acknowledged NATO as a major global actor, expressing confidence that this would not limit the development of a European defense identity as NATO evolved to adapt to the post Cold-War security environment. He cited the emergence of new regional actors to defend the 'fact' of multipolarity and the need for enlargement of the UN Security Council. END SUMMARY.

Europe as U.S. Partner

[12.](#) (SBU) Douste-Blazy described the United States as having acted to use its immense political, economic, technological and cultural power "to take things in hand" in the vacuum left by the end of the Cold War. Although not mentioning Iraq by name, he asserted that the U.S. had now realized "the limits of its action and the limits of unilateralism." The U.S. had learned that no country alone could act and decide for others when it came to international peace and stability. As a result, Douste-Blazy contended, the U.S. had rediscovered the value of a transatlantic partnership based on confidence and mutual respect. He called on Europe to seize the occasion thus presented to play its rightful role in global affairs, saying, "It would be paradoxical if, at the moment when the U.S. appears ready to accept a real partnership with the EU, the EU retreats to deal with our internal difficulties."

[13.](#) (SBU) Douste-Blazy stressed the value of the French-U.S. relationship: "We work and exchange a lot with the U.S. On the ground as with ideas ... the dialogue produces good results. I believe this trend will continue: in any case, I will work with our American partners in a spirit of friendship." At the same time, he saw a need for French firmness, given France's need to defend "its vision of the world and its conception of a balanced partnership."

[14.](#) (SBU) Douste-Blazy described a changing global environment for organizations such as NATO, the United Nations and the European Union in the post-Cold-War period. Saying that NATO was in the process of redefining its role, he asserted that this would not impair the necessary development of a European defense identity. He said it was also time to take into account the appearance of new actors such as China, Japan, India, Brazil, South Africa and Nigeria. In this context, he said, multipolarity should be viewed as 'a fact' rather than as a reflection of a French aim to counterbalance the world's only superpower.

[15.](#) (SBU) Douste-Blazy asserted that regional groupings would better assure world harmony over the longer term, whence the logic of enlarging the UN Security Council. He outlined France's "delicate task" as one of moving "from the status of subordinate to that of partner, subject by subject, crisis by crisis, on a case-by-case basis" with respect to which institution was most appropriate to take a specific action. This was a question for all powers, rising or established, in their relations with the United States. This dynamic would be present in the transatlantic relationship for some time to come.

Next Steps on Europe

[16.](#) (SBU) Douste-Blazy acknowledged the existence of a crisis in Europe that had been "opened, in fact revealed" by the French and Dutch rejections of the European Constitution. This situation was aggravated, he said, by the EU's

subsequent failure to come to agreement on the budget for 2007-2013, which had plunged Europeans into a period of uncertainty and trepidation. He attributed the failure of the referendum primarily to the French public's perception that the most recent enlargement had been decided over their heads. "We've been put on notice," he said, and French leaders would have to take the referendum into account. Echoing Chirac's speech of the previous day, he called for action on economic governance (including tougher talk with the European Central Bank); more funds for European-wide research and development; more attention to security -- in regards to terrorism, aviation security, and health scares; and external action on issues such as WMD, poverty and natural catastrophes.

Turkey and Enlargement

17. (SBU) Regarding Turkey's declaration of non-recognition of Cyprus in connection with its signature of the protocol extending the EU-Turkey customs union to new EU member states, Douste-Blazy amplified on Chirac's more general statement of the previous day by noting that, "It's hardly conceivable that a country would ask to enter into a community without recognizing one of its members.... We're therefore within our rights to ask Turkey to clarify its position and to undertake to implement all its obligations, including those related to the access of member states to Turkish ports and airports." Douste-Blazy said that France intended to respect its commitments vis-a-vis Turkey but expected Turkey -- like other candidate countries -- to do the same with respect to the European Union.

18. (SBU) In separate, following remarks, European Affairs Minister-Delegate Catherine Colonna said Bulgaria and Romania, whose accession treaty was signed in April, would join the EU soon, "inasmuch as they conform to the obligations they have assumed." The requirements for Croatia, she said, were also known: Zagreb must cooperate with the ICTY. As for Turkey, "whether it's membership or another solution," its future with the EU would only be written at the end of a long process and would still be subject to French veto. "If the conditions are fulfilled, the negotiations can open. At their end, if the path of membership still holds, the French people will have the last word in a referendum." Colonna also reminded the gathered ambassadors that Chirac and PM de Villepin had expressed several times this summer France's desire for a dialogue with its European partners on the dynamic of future enlargements.

Middle East/Iraq

19. (C) On the Middle East, Douste-Blazy said, "We will do everything in order that, after the years of drama and setbacks, the virtuous circle leading to peace will be relaunched." He saluted Israel's withdrawal of its colonies from Gaza, calling it an "exemplary operation" and "remarkably executed." On Iraq, he reiterated the GOF's absolute support for the Iraqi people in determining their own future, while reiterating the red-line against any French military presence in Iraq. Douste-Blazy also floated the idea of a possible conference on Iraq, suggesting that, "perhaps we should reflect" on reuniting the Sharm al Sheikh conference participants "to reaffirm the perspective of a withdrawal of foreign troops" and to accompany the coming stages of the political process. (Comment: MFA contacts tried to downplay Douste-Blazy's proposal, claiming it did not yet constitute a new initiative, but conceded they would need to seek clarification from his office, as the Foreign Minister reportedly inserted this language into the speech himself.) Douste-Blazy briefly mentioned Lebanon, noting that the renaissance of Lebanese democracy and sovereignty gave new hope to the region; he made no mention of Syria in his remarks.

Africa

10. (SBU) Noting that Africa occupied a 'particular place' in the heart and conscience of France, Douste-Blazy asserted that there would be neither security nor economic growth in the Western world without stabilization and development in Africa, especially given Africa's geographic proximity to Europe -- 14 kilometers at its closest. Security and development, he continued, were inseparably intertwined. He emphasized that France's aim of ensuring that economic growth in Africa no longer would depend exclusively on development aid. "We're working to defeat this unacceptable paradox," he said. As for conflict regions in Africa, France would continue to press for the growing political engagement of regional mediators, especially the African Union (AU).

Other

¶11. (SBU) Douste-Blazy only briefly addressed Asia, and mentioned Iran and North Korea only in passing while in connection with nonproliferation.

¶12. (SBU) Douste-Blazy also briefly addressed internal ministry concerns, and the tight budget the Quai faces in ¶2006. He stressed the growing importance of public diplomacy in foreign relations.
STAPLETON